

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application .

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An article-positioning machine comprising means to collect the articles in a plurality of individual housings moving in a closed circuit, means arranged in ~~each of said housings at least one drop zone~~ to allow the articles to each drop in an orientated fashion in at least one drop zone inside a corresponding alignment conduit moved together with each housing and exit means to extract the articles which are orientated and aligned from said alignment conduits onto an exit conveyor belt, each alignment conduit comprising an upper portion for collecting the articles from the corresponding housing, at least one movable intermediate portion defining at least one conduit for receiving the articles from said upper portion, and a lower portion comprising at least two compartments for receiving the articles from said intermediate portion, wherein said upper and lower portions are moved together along said closed circuit while said intermediate portions are movable with respect to the upper and lower portions, a stationary support plane being provided interposed between the intermediate portion and lower portions, and drive means being provided to selectively move said intermediate portion in order to put said conduit of the intermediate portion in alignment with the upper portion so as to receive an article from the same and then put the conduit of the intermediate portion in alignment with one or the other of said at least two compartments of the lower portion to transfer said article to the same via at least one interruption existing in said support plane.

2. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said drive means are arranged to selectively move the intermediate portion in a direction transverse to the drop direction of the articles along the alignment conduit.

3. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said drive means are arranged to selectively move the intermediate portion with a to and fro movement with stops at the ends of travel and without intermediate stops, each stop determining at least one of said alignments of the at least one conduit of the intermediate portion with the upper portion and/or with one or the other of said at least two compartments of the lower portion.

4. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 3, wherein said intermediate portion comprises two adjacent conduits, said lower portion comprises three adjacent compartments and the support plane comprises at least two interruptions.

5. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said drive means are arranged to selectively move the intermediate portion with a to and fro movement with stops at the ends of travel and at least one intermediate stop, each stop determining at least one of said alignments of at least one conduit of the intermediate portion with the upper portion and/or with one of said three compartments of the lower portion.

6. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 5, wherein said intermediate portion comprises three adjacent conduits and said lower portion comprises four or five adjacent compartments and the support plane comprises at least two interruptions.

7. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said intermediate portion defines a single conduit and is articulated with the lower end of the upper portion, with said drive means being arranged to selectively move the intermediate portion with a pendular motion with stops at, at least the ends of travel, each stop determining at least one of said alignments of the conduit of the intermediate portion with one of the compartments of the lower portion while constantly maintaining the alignment with the upper portion.

8. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

9. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said drive means comprises at least one fluid dynamic cylinder associated with each intermediate portion and independently controlled by control means.

10. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 5, wherein said drive means comprises at least one set of two fluid dynamic cylinders associated with each intermediate portion and independently controlled by control means.

11. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 9, wherein said drive means further comprises a mechanical movement transmission for each intermediate portion.

12. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said drive means comprises at least one electric motor associated with each intermediate portion and independently controlled by control means.

13. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said drive means comprises at least one electric motor and a mechanical movement transmission associated with each intermediate portion with said electric motor being independently controlled by control means.

14. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said drive means comprises at least one stationary cam profile fixed to a machine bed and at least one cam follower associated with each intermediate portion.

15. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said housings are adapted to collect the articles in a horizontal and pre-orientated position.

16. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said housings and their corresponding upper access portions comprise respective lateral movable parts linked together and capable of being changed in position to adapt the housings and upper portions to articles of different sizes.

17. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 16, wherein said housings and/or their corresponding upper portions further comprise respective interior movable parts capable of being changed in position to adapt the housings and upper portions to articles of different sizes.

18. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said lower portions comprise at least one lateral movable part associated with each compartment, with said lateral movable part capable of being changed in position to adapt the lower portions to articles of different sizes.

19. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 18, wherein said lower portions further comprise at least one interior movable part associated with each compartment, with said interior movable parts capable of being changed in position to adapt the lower portions to articles of different sizes.

20. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 1, wherein said upper portions and/or intermediate portions and/or lower portions form respective movable assemblies capable of being changed in position to adapt the upper and/or intermediate and/or lower portions to articles of different sizes.

21. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 2, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

22. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 3, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

23. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 4, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

24. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 5, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

25. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 6, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

26. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 7, wherein said closed circuit is circular or elliptical and comprises as many drop zones as there are compartments in the lower portion.

27. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 10, wherein said drive means further comprises a mechanical movement transmission for each intermediate portion.

28. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 5, wherein said drive means comprises at least one electric motor associated with each intermediate portion and independently controlled by control means.

29. (Previously Presented) A machine in accordance with claim 5, wherein said drive means comprises at least one electric motor and a mechanical movement transmission associated with each intermediate portion with said electric motor being independently controlled by control means.